

The chapters on the commonly found childhood illnesses are simple, clear and elegantly compact. Throughout the book the reader is reminded of the vital opportunities for health education afforded in any hospital, clinic, school and local authority's agency.

In the next edition mention might be made of Little's disease, keratomalacia due to absent blink reflex in any ill child, out-patient rehydration centres and the prognosis of the hæmoglobinopathies. Lastly, should tropical prems really receive vitamin K as a routine?

B GANS

Munro Kerr's Operative Obstetrics

7th ed by J Chassar Moir

CBE HONLLD MA MD FRCS(Ed) FRCOG

pp x+1003 illustrated £6 6s

London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox 1964

This is a most impressive book. It is well written, lavishly illustrated and beautifully produced. Originally it was written out of the unrivalled experience of Munro Kerr in Glasgow; now Professor Chassar Moir takes the book into the calmer waters of modern obstetrics, a field in which he too is an acknowledged master. He has been partly or wholly responsible for the revisions of the last three editions, appearing in 1949, 1956 and 1964. This is evidence of its continuing popularity, for the first edition appeared in 1908. There are obvious difficulties in bringing such a work up to date, for it is hard to prune the dead wood but, here, no criticism can be made. There are backward looks to what used to be accepted practice but only to illustrate the evolution of present methods; to follow the course of evolution in this way is educative and instructive. Brief case histories illuminate particular difficulties and it is reassuring to find that not always were the writers splendidly triumphant.

The range of references, over 2,000 of them, is tremendous and views in opposition to the author's are fairly stated and carefully weighed. Nothing is skimmed or glossed over in discussion but Professor Moir never leaves any doubt about his own preferences in treatment nor why he has these preferences. Every postgraduate should read and ought to own this book. In the finer points of operative obstetrics he will refer to it many times in his life.

PHILIP RHODES

Skin Diseases in Africa

by James Marshall MD(London)

pp x+134 illustrated R3

Cape Town: Maskew Miller 1964

In a thoroughly entertaining style this unique essay in epidemiology sets out to draw a picture of the patterns of dermatology seen in the various parts of the huge continent of Africa. The factors

thought important in influencing the incidence of skin disease and then the conditions themselves are considered. The chief conclusions are that race has far less influence on the incidence of dermatoses than is popularly supposed and that the more prosperous the country the nearer does the spectrum of dermatoses approach that seen in Europe or the USA.

It is a pity that comments on dermatoses in South Africa so far outweigh those on all other parts of Africa but perhaps this is difficult to avoid when the information has been collected at Stellenbosch. Some statements leave room for disagreement: for example, it is stated that throughout tropical Africa the leucocyte count is significantly lower in the negro than in the white; that malnutrition probably inhibits viral infections; that erythrasma is rare; that boils may appear in patients on griseofulvin treatment and that pityriasis rosea is spread by fleas. Subcutaneous phycomycosis is mentioned as occurring only in Uganda, yet in the literature are reports from Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroons, Senegal, Ivory Coast and the Sudan.

The appendix contains useful tables on the incidence of dermatoses in various African States as well as in other parts of the world and underlines how little we really know of dermatology in Africa.

The price of 30s is most reasonable, and this is just the book the lucky dermatologist should take to keep him happily interested on the flight to Africa.

R R M HARMAN

Multiple Sclerosis: A Reappraisal

by Douglas McAlpine, Charles E Lumsden

and E D Acheson

pp viii+415 50s

Edinburgh & London: F & S Livingstone 1965

This is a new book and not just a new edition of the older book on multiple sclerosis by two of the authors. It marshalls the known facts regarding its epidemiology, clinical features and laboratory findings.

Dr Acheson's contribution deals with epidemiology; in an excellent and comprehensive review he examines critically the published data on the occurrence of the disease in various parts of the world and the possible implications of its geographical incidence.

Dr McAlpine is responsible for the second part, concerned with the clinical aspects of the disease including such special features as the familial incidence, the questionable role of trauma and the common problem of the differential diagnosis from cervical spondylosis. There is a chapter on treatment and another on the medicosocial problem.